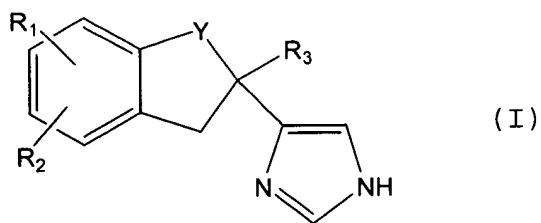


IN THE CLAIMS:

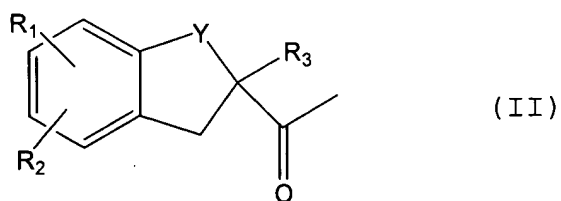
Please amend claims 3-7 and 10, as shown below in the detailed listing of all claims which are, or were, in this application:

1. (Original) A process for preparing substituted imidazole derivatives of formula (I) and acid addition salts thereof

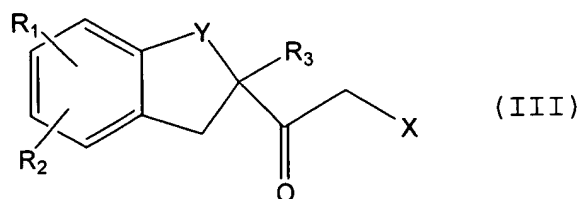


in which formula Y is $-CH_2-$ or $-CO-$, R_1 is H , halogen or hydroxy, R_2 is H or halogen and R_3 is H or lower alkyl, comprising the steps of

- a) halogenating a compound of formula (II)

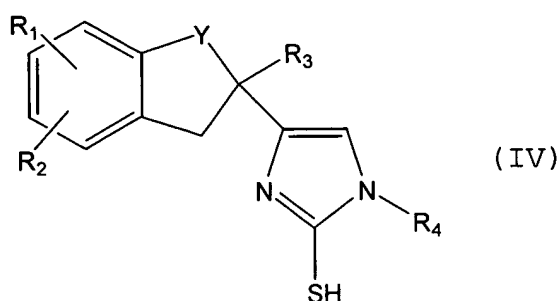


wherein Y , R_1 , R_2 and R_3 are as defined above, to obtain a compound of formula (III)



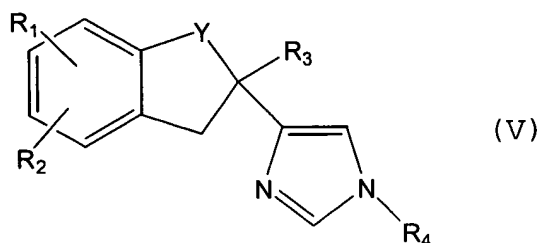
wherein Y, R₁, R₂ and R₃ are as defined above and X is halogen,

b) reacting the compound of formula (III) thus obtained with an amine of formula R₄NH₂, wherein R₄ is an easily removable leaving group, and an alkali metal thiocyanate, to obtain a compound of formula (IV)



wherein Y, R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ are as defined above,

c) removing the mercapto group from the compound of formula (IV) to obtain a compound of formula (V)



wherein Y, R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ are as defined above,

d) removing the group R₄ from the compound of formula (V) to obtain a compound of formula (I), and, if desired,

e) converting the resulting compound of formula (I) into an acid addition salt thereof.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein step a) is carried by reacting a compound of formula (II) with Br₂ in methanol at a temperature of -8 to +25 °C.

3. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~ wherein step b) is carried out by reacting a compound of formula (III) with benzylamine and potassium thiocyanate.

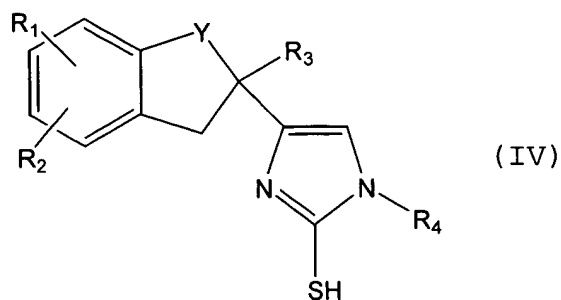
4. (Currently amended) A process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1 wherein step c) is carried out in the presence of Raney-Nickel at a temperature of 40 °C to 90 °C.

5. (Currently amended) A process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1 wherein step d) is carried out by using ammonium formate in the presence of Pd/C.

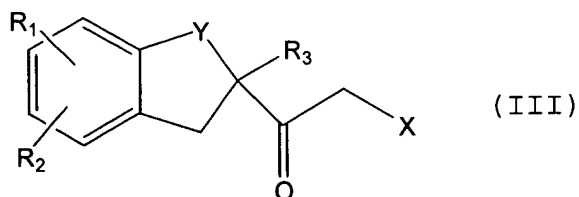
6. (Currently amended) A process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1 wherein step d) is carried out by hydrogenation in the presence of Pd/C.

7. (Currently amended) A process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1 wherein Y is $-\text{CH}_2-$, R_1 is F, R_2 is H and R_3 is ethyl.

8. (Original) A process for preparing a compound of formula (IV)



wherein Y is $-\text{CH}_2-$ or $-\text{CO}-$, R_1 is H, halogen or hydroxy, R_2 is H or halogen and R_3 is H or lower alkyl, comprising reacting a compound of formula (III)

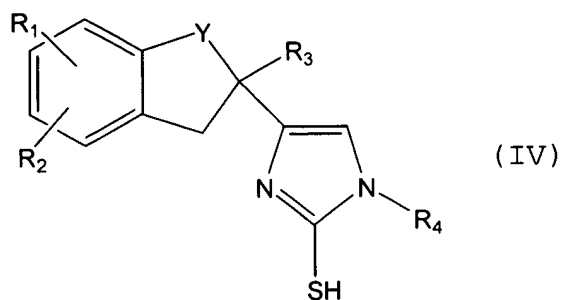


wherein Y, R_1 , R_2 and R_3 are as defined above and X is halogen, with an amine of formula R_4NH_2 , wherein R_4 is an easily removable leaving group, and an alkali metal thiocyanate.

9. (Original) A process according to claim 8 comprising reacting a compound of formula (III) with benzylamine and potassium thiocyanate.

10. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 8 ~~or 9~~ wherein Y is $-\text{CH}_2-$, R_1 is F, R_2 is H and R_3 is ethyl.

11. (Original) A compound of formula (IV)



wherein Y is $-\text{CH}_2-$ or $-\text{CO}-$, R_1 is halogen or hydroxy, R_2 is H or halogen, R_3 is H or lower alkyl and R_4 is an easily removable leaving group.

12. (Original) A compound according to claim 11 wherein Y is $-\text{CH}_2-$, R_1 is F, R_2 is H, R_3 is ethyl and R_4 is benzyl.